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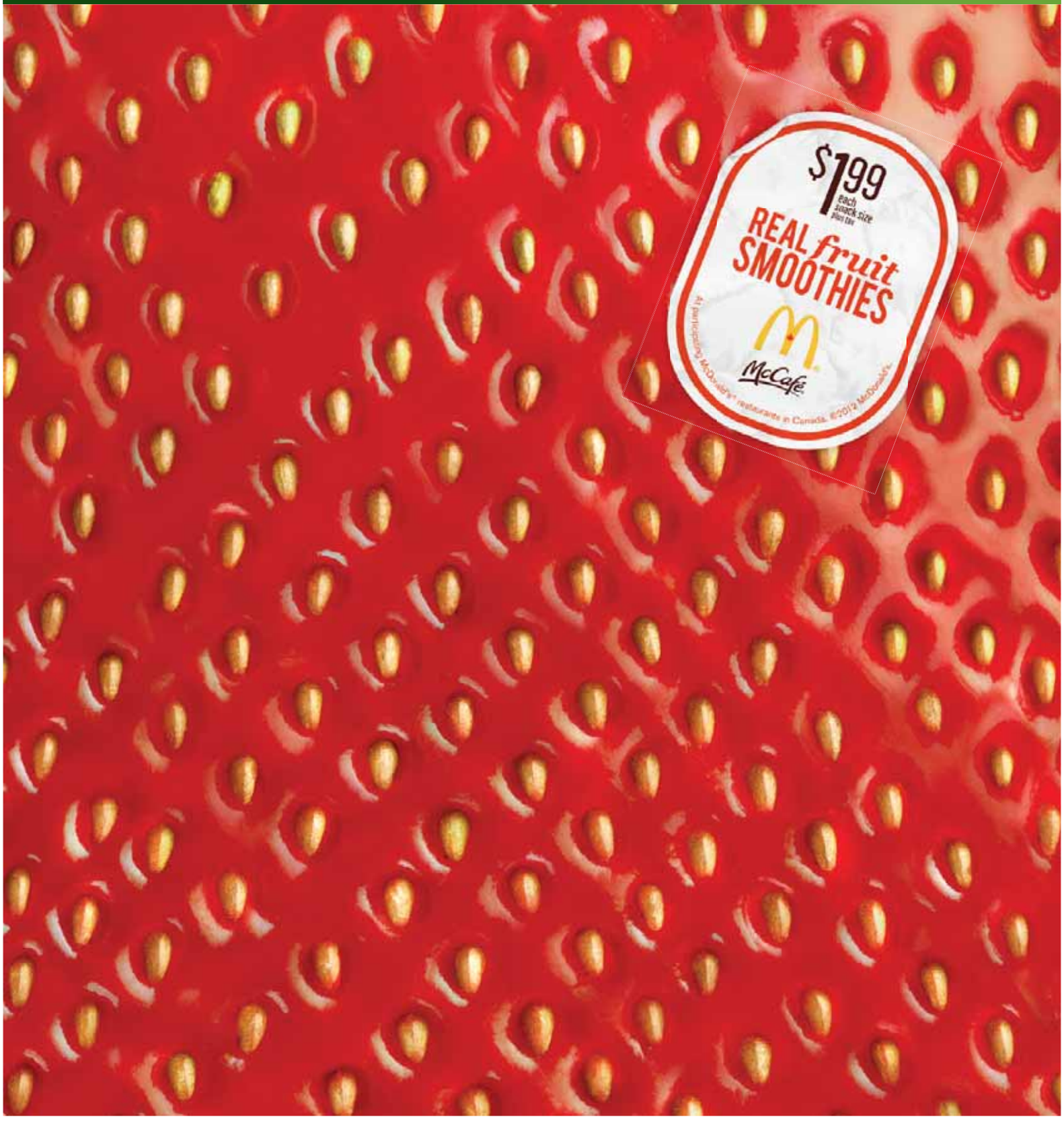

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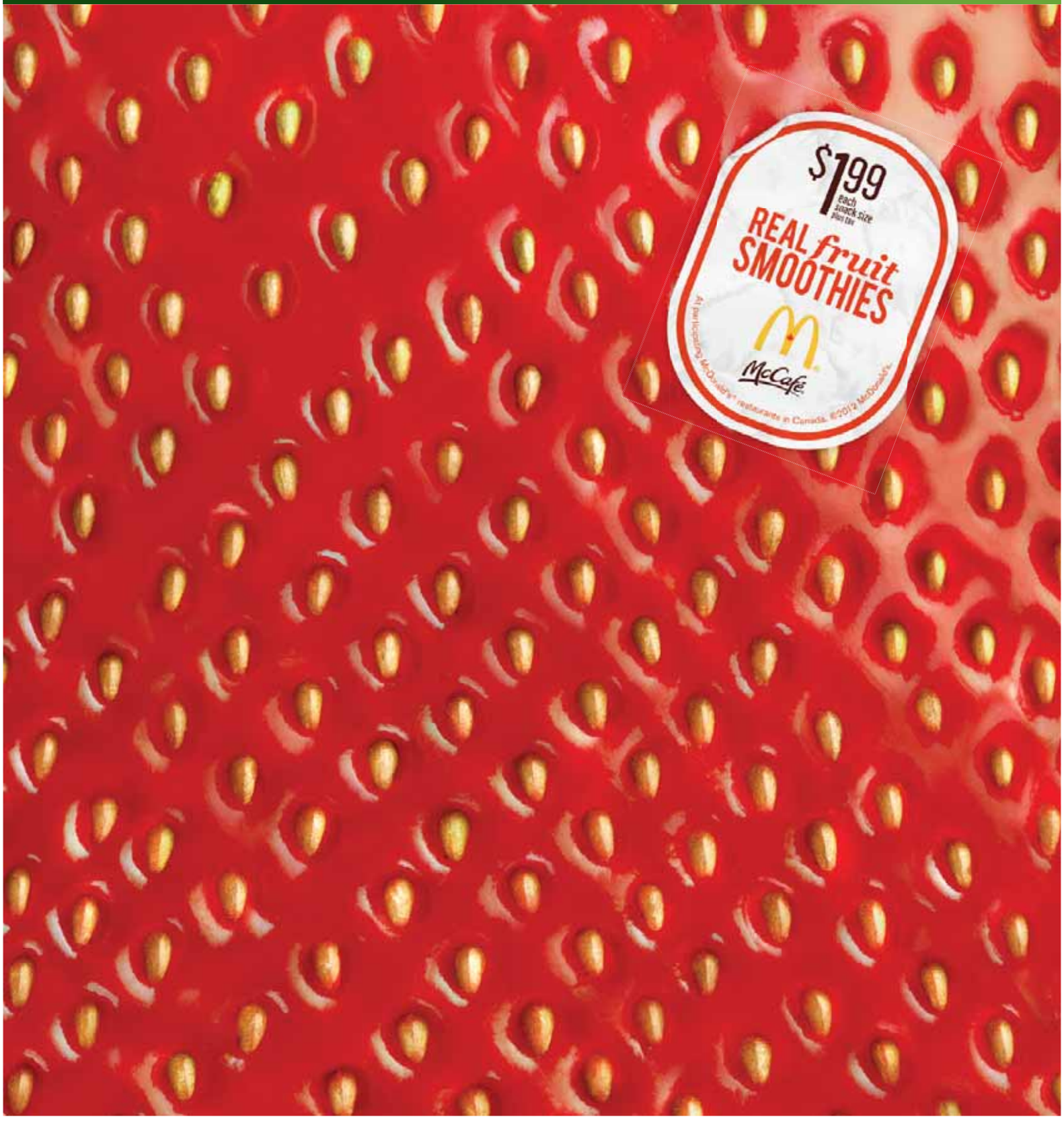

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BILLY ZANE HOPES TITANIC 3D WILL HELP 'LEO-MANIACS' SEE HIS CHARACTER THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS

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Former Nanaimo RCMP Const. Janet Merlo shakes an officer's hand in August 1991 after completing her basic police training at the RCMP Training Academy in Regina. She filed a class-action suit against the RCMP in B.C. Supreme Court Tuesday, alleging she suffered 20 years of sexual harassment and discrimination on the job after this photo was taken. KLEIN LYONS/CONTRIBUTED

RCMP facing sex-harassment class-action suit

Support. Former constable has more than 150 officers behind her after claiming she suffered discrimination while working for Mounties

KATE WEBB
kate.webb@metronews.ca

A former Nanaimo police constable filed a class-action lawsuit against the RCMP Tuesday alleging widespread systemic discrimination in the force against female officers, civilian members and civil-service employees.

More than 150 RCMP officers have signed on since former RCMP Cpl. Catherine Galliford came forward with explosive allegations of harassment on the job last November, though Galliford is not participating in the class-action suit.

The suit, filed by former Const. Janet Merlo, claims she suffered depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of 20 years of discrimination and harassment at the Nanaimo RCMP detachment.

"It's too late for me" said Merlo in a statement released by her lawyers, "but I hope that this lawsuit will bring about some positive change for women who are still with the RCMP and women who join in the future."

The notice of claim alleges male members at Merlo's detachment planted sex toys around the office, yelled at her when she got pregnant with her first child and told her to keep her legs closed, and frequently made overt sexual comments and advances toward her.

Thunder Bay, Ont., lawyer Alexander Zaitzeff is one of nine legal experts working on the case, including Vancouver-based lawyer David Klein.

Zaitzeff said the central issue in the case "is the paramilitary culture within the RCMP, in which there is an abuse of authority that occurs, and then it becomes relentless bullying, harassment, sexual predatory activity such as sexual assaults, sexual innuendoes, sexual pranks."

If the suit is certified by a judge and goes ahead, the settlement could be in the millions of dollars, but Zaitzeff said that for the women involved the case is not about money.

"Not one of the 155 to 160 women has ever called and said, 'How much can I get?'" Zaitzeff told Metro.

"They want serious, committed change for all the women who work at the RCMP today, and for the women that will come forward in the future to work for the RCMP."

An RCMP spokesperson reached by email said, "As this matter is before the courts, it would be inappropriate for us to comment."

Taming the playoffs

No more live sites and road closures, says city. Due to last year's riots, Stanley Cup celebrations will be booze-free and family-friendly PAGE 3

Syria one step closer to peace

UN envoy Kofi Annan receives backing from Syria and China on a peace plan that could end the nation's bloodshed PAGE 7

Springtime in the city of love

Stroll the streets of Paris
TRAVEL
PAGE 19

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No more 'toxic soup' of booze and transit

Drunk people attempting to get onto transit and those thinking of bringing booze to the downtown core during the playoffs will be stopped, according to the VPD.

"We can't allow the toxic soup that we saw last year occur in Vancouver. We need to interdict it much earlier," Deputy Chief Doug LePard said, adding the VPD is co-ordinating efforts with regional police agencies and the transit police for a strategy to prevent liquor from being transported into the city.

Meanwhile, TransLink's chief operating officer, Doug Kelsey, said there will be a greater police presence at stations than ever before.

He added SkyTrain may skip stops or temporarily close stations for short periods of time in "extreme situations," or help slow down the flow of people coming into the downtown.

"The goal is not to shut the region down, but to contain the isolated problem," Kelsey said.

According to LePard, VPD officers will be equipped with cameras to capture lawbreakers and will hand out pre-printed tickets for liquor violations.

He added that police officers could also look in people's bags for alcohol before they hop on the train.

"The Liquor Act provides that authority when we have reasonable grounds to believe that someone is possessing liquor in unlawful circumstances," he said. "Everything is situational. It depends where you are, what you're doing, what your demeanour is.

"Make no mistake, if people intend to come downtown to make trouble, we will be waiting for you."

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson unveils the city's Stanley Cup playoff plans Tuesday. PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

Tamer playoff-party plans in the works

Smaller celebrations. No more live-feed sites and street closures downtown

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
phylicia.torrevillas@metronews.ca

Goodbye, live sites and jumbo screens.

The City of Vancouver announced Tuesday it will hold smaller neighbourhood celebrations instead of a massive downtown street party in hopes of preventing a repeat of the Stanley Cup riot.

Families and hockey fans will be encouraged to gather at alcohol-free, family-oriented celebrations in 23 community centres across the city, or at smaller block parties.

"Figuring out what will work in each community, whether it's in a community centre, a block party, what supporters or sponsors can come on board ... that's all being mapped out now," Mayor Gregor Robertson said.

The event plans will be rolled out if the Canucks advance to the third round of the NHL playoffs.

Robertson said the city has set aside $100,000 for these events, and is prepared to add more if it needs to.

"Everything will hinge on how long each series goes, how long the playoffs last," he said. "This is a scalable plan."

John Furlong, who co-authored an independent review into the Stanley Cup riot, described the plan as "responsible and thoughtful" because it decentralizes the event to control the crowds.

"People will come downtown and book seats in restaurants and bars to have a good time, but the likelihood of gathering the numbers we had last year is incredibly slim," Furlong said.

Robertson said the downtown core will still be open to the public and he encouraged people to support downtown businesses and "celebrate responsibly."

"If people want to come downtown and cause trouble, they will stick out like sore thumbs," Robertson said.

The charges

197

As of March 20, the Crown has approved 197 criminal charges against 75 suspects in relation to last year's riot.

1 NEWS

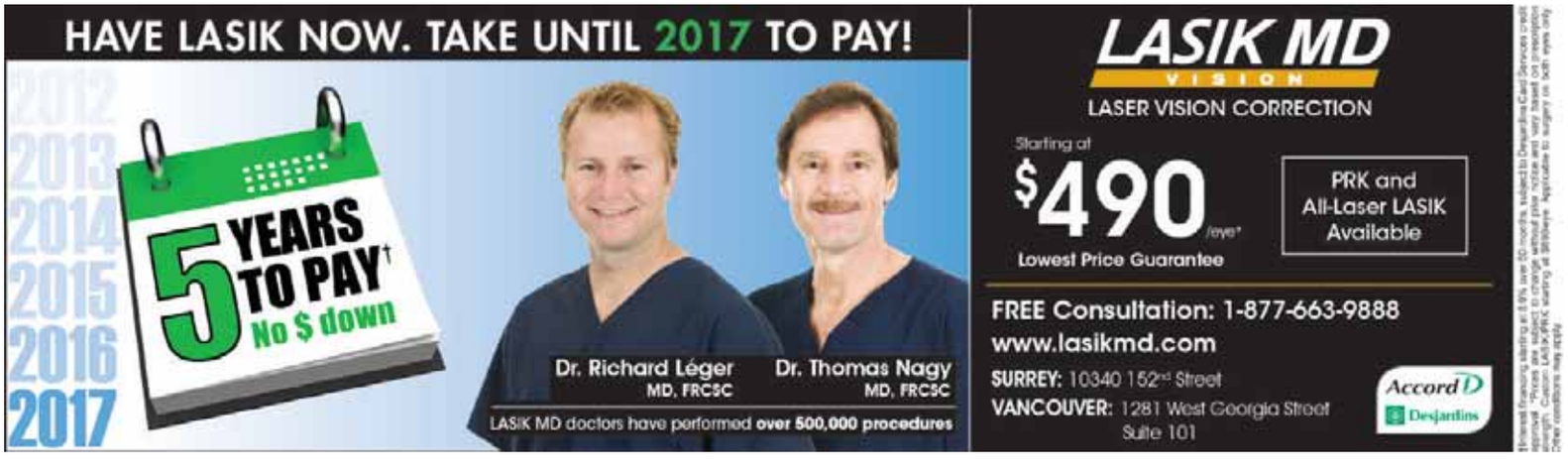
Mobile news

Age may creep up on man, but his best friend gets there at warp speed. The American Veterinary Medical Association holds that cats and small dogs are geriatric at seven — and large dogs at six. Scan for the story.

On the web

Beetle jewels

Live beetles covered in jewelry are all the rage in Mexico and are part of a centuries-old tradition. But as the live jewelry gains popularity, not all fashionistas and environmentalists are on the same page. Watch at metronews.ca/video



A tumultuous week for Premier Christy Clark continued Tuesday as a poll showed she had the second-lowest approval rating among premiers in the country. MATT KIELTYKA/METRO FILE

Premier's approval rate drops to 33 per cent

Downward trend. Angus Reid poll shows disapproval of B.C. premier second to that of Quebec's Charest

DANIEL PALMER
vancouver@metronews.ca

Christy Clark has the second-lowest approval rating of Canada's premiers, according to a new poll.

The Angus Reid poll noted Clark's approval has dropped seven points to 33 per cent, more than any other premier in the same quarterly period.

In contrast, the NDP's Adrian Dix is experiencing a 47 per cent approval rating, one of the highest among primary opposition leaders in the country.

"These are very good numbers for Dix and the NDP," said Mario Canseco, Angus Reid vice president, noting any approval above 40 per cent is a difficult task in Canadian politics.

While Clark's approval is an improvement on Gordon Campbell's 16 per cent before leaving office, Liberal support has been eroding largely due to the resurgence of the B.C. Conservatives over the past year, said Doug McArthur, SFU public-policy professor.

"The declining popularity of Premier Clark as leader is creating a certain anxiety on the part of a number of the MLAs as to what's going to happen. A number of them will be thinking about what to do with their political future," McArthur said.

On Monday, stalwart Liberal John van Dongen became the first sitting MLA to fly the Conservative banner in more than 30 years.

McArthur said van Dongen's discontentment with his former party was well known and therefore his defection may not be an indication of widespread internal disenchantment. "It's a big thing to jump off the ship that you've been on with colleagues and friends for many years and go over to the other side," McArthur said.

Angus Reid will conduct a new poll this week to assess party support in the run-up to two provincial byelections next month. A recent poll suggests both the Liberals (28 per cent) and Conservatives (19 per cent) trail the NDP (42 per cent).

Saskatchewan's Brad Wall remains Canada's most popular premier with a staggering 70 per cent approval rating. Quebec's Jean Charest is the only other premier to fare worse than Clark, garnering 27 per cent approval.

Criticism

Van Dongen's decision a mistake: Clark

B.C. Premier Christy Clark says John van Dongen's surprise decision to leave her Liberal government to join the provincial Conservatives is a mistake that helps the Opposition New Democrats. "He's made a bad decision," Clark said Tuesday. "What his decision is going to do is make it easier for Adrian Dix to become premier."

She said she and van Dongen have spent their political lives striving to ensure British Columbia is governed by free-enterprise governments, but van Dongen has now decided to abandon that pursuit.

Van Dongen disagreed with Clark as he prepared to take his seat in the legislature for his first time as a member of the Conservatives. "I think that the vote is already split and what I'm proposing is what I believe is a good solution for British Columbians in terms of a free-enterprise option," he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C.'s top doc weighs in on marijuana debate

Laws aimed at criminalizing marijuana users are falling short and need re-evaluation, according to a report published by a coalition of B.C. health officials Wednesday.

Dr. Evan Wood, founder of Stop the Violence BC, said experts are advocating not for easier access to marijuana but for a regime whereby purchases and production are regulated and taxed.

"If anyone takes a sober look at the current situation we're in, it's a totally unsustainable model. We could do a lot better job in terms of bending public resources in a way that would actually reduce crime and increase public health.

"There's some bad irony that we're expecting a federal budget that will make cuts to health and social services, yet billions of tax dollars will go to building prisons to lock up minor drug offenders."

The report is co-authored by British Columbia's provincial health officer.

"Despite the fact that there's a lot of social costs to illegal drug use, there's also quite a gulf of evidence that shows what isn't working with marijuana prohibition," said Dr. Perry Kendall, the province's top doctor.

The report published in Open Medicine journal outlines the outpouring of support from the public-health community for a new approach to the illegal drug problem and the greater acknowledgment of the ineffectiveness of, and harm caused by, the war on drugs.

KYLA JONES/FOR METRO

Assault charges

Two Esquimalt teens arrested after stabbing

A 19-year-old Esquimalt teenager is facing charges after a Friday stabbing. The man is being charged with assault with a weapon and assault after a 22-year-old man was stabbed. When officers arrived on the scene, they found the victim with stab wounds to his hand and arm. The suspect was arrested at a nearby house. Officers took another teen into custody for multiple breaches. The stabbing victim released from hospital.

PHILIP CAMPBELL/FOR METRO

No follow-up. Fare evaders not being punished: TransLink

Those caught riding public transit without a ticket are subject to no punishment whatsoever, say spokespeople for Vancouver's transit system.

TransLink spokesperson Drew Snider claims that while the transit authority is empowered to issue tickets — typically $173 per offense — they have no ability to enforce collection.

Fine collection falls to ICBC, which says it only collects from those who come forward to pay voluntarily.

Despite the stern legal warning printed on the back of every fare-evasion ticket, unpaid tickets are not currently referred to any collection agency. Whether due to collection policy or not, fine payment has been low. Of 64,000 tickets issued since the beginning of 2011, only about 7,500 have been paid.

"This is the first time it's been brought to my attention," Transportation Minister Blair Lekstrom said Tuesday. "I'm going to fix it."

NDP transportation critic Harry Bains said it was "frustrating" to hear Lekstrom claim not to have heard of the issue before now.

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San Diego
Air + 3 Nights + 3-Night Cruise — from $519 + taxes & fees $120

INCLUDES all airfare, 3 nights Mission Bay accom and 3-night cruise sailing from San Diego to Vancouver. **UPGRADE** to a balcony stateroom from $14 per night.

Vacation

Hong Kong Air + 7 Nights — from $979 + taxes & fees $416

INCLUDES accom across from the Victoria Harbour. **UPGRADE** to 4-star accom from $10 per night. **ADD** pre-dinner cruise from $47.

USA

Las Vegas Air + 3 Nights
$207 from
+ taxes & fees $135
INCLUDES accom on the Strip.
UPGRADE to 4-star accom from $15 per night.
ADD Champagne Rock Star Tour from $48.

Anaheim
Family Special, Air + 3 Nights — from $209◊ + taxes & fees $120

INCLUDES central accom with free transportation to major attractions. Price per person based on family of 4. **UPGRADE** to 4-star accom from $5 per night. **BOOK** this package based on double occupancy from $259.

Orlando
Family Special, Air + 7 Nights — from $518◊ + taxes & fees $132

INCLUDES central accom with free transportation to major attractions. Price per person based on family of 4. **UPGRADE** to 4-star accom from $7 per night. **BOOK** this package based on double occupancy from $639.

Maui
Family Special, Air + 7 Nights — from $519◊ + taxes & fees $143

INCLUDES 1-bedroom condo style Kihei accom. Price per person based on family of 4. **BOOK** package based on double occupancy from $729.

Scottsdale Air + 3 Nights — from $569 + taxes & fees $106

INCLUDES accom. **BONUS** daily breakfast included. **UPGRADE** to 5-star accom from $27 per night. **ADD** 3-day car rental with unlimited mileage from $21 per day.

Honolulu Air + 7 Nights — from $699 + taxes & fees $117

INCLUDES central accom near Waikiki Beach. **ADD** Star Sunset Dinner Show cruise from $115.

Europe

Paris Air + First 2 Nights
$373 from
+ taxes & fees $514

INCLUDES central accom near Bercy Village and Gare de Lyon train station. **ADD** Tour de France of Wine from $84.

Frankfurt Air + 7 Nights — from $499 + taxes & fees $553

INCLUDES central accom, near shopping and major attactions.

Amsterdam
Air + First 2 Nights — from $583 + taxes & fees $486

INCLUDES city centre accom near Central Station. **ADD** Windmills and Edam tour from $46.

Canada

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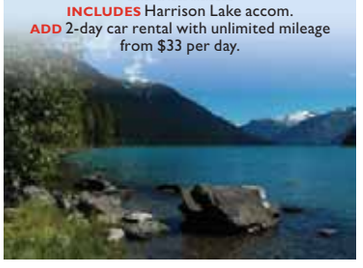

Victoria 2 Nights 4-Star — from $145 taxes & fees included

INCLUDES Inner Harbour accom. **ADD** whale watching from $104.

Whistler 3 Nights 4-Star — from $188 taxes & fees included

INCLUDES Village accom. **UPGRADE** to 5-star accom from $62 per night.

Toronto Air + 3 Nights — from $559 + taxes & fees $160

INCLUDES downtown accom. **UPGRADE** to 4-star accom from $14 per night. **ADD** CN Tower from $32.

Montreal Air + 3 Nights — from $545 + taxes & fees $153

INCLUDES accom near Old Montreal. **BONUS** daily breakfast included. **UPGRADE** to 4-star accom from $24 per night. **ADD** city tour from $56.

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Crime. Native goods worth thousands stolen from Chilliwack home

Over $25,000 in Native art and jewelry was stolen from a residence in Chilliwack this February, RCMP say.

Among the loot reported stolen were 10 masks with a value of over $10,000 and a large amount of gold and silver jewelry.

The pieces are conspicuous and easily identifiable, so police are asking all potential buyers to seek proof of ownership, and to report any suspicious solicitations.

In Canada, stolen pieces are reclaimed without compensation to buyers, as one unwary Ontario collector found out when a prized statue by Bill Reid was reclaimed earlier this year.

Three of the stolen Native masks. CONTRIBUTED

GRAHAM TEMPLETON/FOR METRO

Warning

Proposed changes to Fisheries Act rile scientists

As the federal government prepares to table its budget Thursday, local scientists are voicing their opposition to proposed changes to the Fisheries Act.

"My impression is the government is trying to unshackle industry so that they can just get on with development," said Eric Taylor, UBC zoology professor.

According to a leaked document, changes to the Fisheries Act would only require the protection of fish that have "an economic, cultural or ecological value." METRO

Pageant contestant slams transgender controversy

UBC student Thea Lieffers is set to compete in the Miss World Canada pageant in May. CONTRIBUTED

Beauty. Thea Lieffers, a Miss World Canada contestant, believes transgender applicants should get the chance to apply

KATE WEBB
kate.webb@metronews.ca

A UBC student who is about to enter the shimmering world of televised beauty pageants is standing up for disqualified transgender Miss World Universe contestant Jenna Talackova.

Thea Lieffers, a first-year arts student, is in the running to become Miss World Canada in May, around the same time Talackova would have competed for the title of Miss Universe Canada.

"Everybody's different, so if a woman is born as a man then I feel like she should have every right to do anything in life she wants to do as a woman," Lieffers told Metro.

The 18-year-old admitted she found the pageant concept intimidating when she first applied last spring.

While she won acceptance into the Miss World Canada running easily, it's clear not everyone is so lucky.

Talackova, 23, has made national headlines since being disqualified last week from the Miss Universe Canada contest for being biologically male, after making it all the way to the finals in the Miss Vancouver pageant.

She has denounced the decision as discrimination, a charge Miss Universe Canada denies.

"It's tough being a young woman trying to make it into a pageant and not feel self-conscious all the time … so for someone like Jenna to enter a pageant and do what she wants to do, I just think it's really sad that the pageant business … wouldn't even allow that," Lieffers said.

Lieffers is set to compete in the Miss World Canada pageant at the River Rock Casino Resort in Richmond on May 13.

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CBC

Trial. Accused looked stressed after Tori's death: Ex-girlfriend

The man accused of killing eight-year-old Victoria Stafford looked "haggard" and seemed stressed out in the days after her death, court heard Tuesday.

Michael Rafferty visited ex-girlfriend Barbara Armstrong, 44, who kept him illegally supplied with Percocet pills, a few days after Tori's disappearance on April 8, 2009, and he didn't seem like himself, she testified.

"He was looking kind of haggard. He had a cold sore — he gets cold sores when he gets super stressed," Armstrong testified.

Rafferty, 31, told her that a friend of a friend's daughter had gone missing, and he was going to help search for her, Armstrong said at the trial in London, Ont. Court has heard that another girl named Amanda, whom Rafferty was seeing around the time of Tori's death, knew the girl's family.

Rafferty has pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder, sexual assault causing bodily harm and kidnapping.

Quotable

"He said that he hadn't been eating, he hadn't been sleeping."

Barbara Armstrong, ex-girlfriend of Michael Rafferty, testifying at his trial for the murder of Tori Stafford

The Crown alleges that he and his girlfriend at the time, Terri-Lynne McClintic, abducted Tori outside her elementary school on April 8 and drove her to a rural area more than 100 kilometres north, where she was raped and killed with a hammer.

But between the abduction in Woodstock, Ont., and the killing near Mount Forest, Ont., Rafferty and McClintic made several stops, it's alleged, including at Armstrong's house in Guelph, Ont.

When Armstrong returned home from work that day at about 4:30 p.m., Rafferty was waiting in his car with a young brown-haired woman in the passenger's seat, she said. The trial continues Wednesday. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Scandal. Cyber-attack on NDP vote the work of organized professionals: Tech company

Hackers. Scytl Canada says hundreds of thousands of false vote requests sent

An NDP delegate wears a Brian Topp hat as she votes at a polling station in the fourth round of voting during the NDP leadership convention in Toronto on March 24. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

More than 10,000 "malevolent" Internet addresses were used to jam the NDP leadership convention's online voting system, according to the tech company that ran the vote.

The denial-of-service attack delayed voting for several hours and pushed the crowning of new NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair late into Saturday evening.

Some observers of the weekend convention immediately claimed the technical delays as evidence that New Democrats are not ready to govern.

But a statement Tuesday from Scytl Canada, which ran the online vote, described Saturday's cyber-attack as an organized, professional and illegal effort.

"We deeply regret the inconvenience to NDP voters caused by this malicious, massive, orchestrated attempt to thwart democracy," Susan Crutchlow, the general manager of Scytl Canada, said in a release.

"We are proud, however, that our robust system, which is used by many governments around the world, repelled this attack, did not crash and completed its mission of giving all NDP members who wished to vote the opportunity to do so securely."

The Spanish-based company also thanked the party for its patience with the long delays caused by the attack.

Scytl said "many hundreds of thousands" of false voting requests were sent to the system.

"This effectively 'jammed up the pipe' into the voting system, delaying voter access," said the company statement.

The so-called "botnet" used computers around the world, but mainly in Canada. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Breast cancer

Mammogram errors

A study found 109 breast-cancer cases that had not been previously diagnosed in Quebec. The provincial College of Physicians conducted the search after learning there may be errors in previous mammograms. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Private vs. public

Toews speaks on online attacks

Public Safety Minister Vic Toews appeared before a committee Tuesday examining whether his privilege as an MP was breached when online videos disclosed details of his personal life. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Quebec

Students protest

Students blocked access to government buildings in several Quebec cities on Tuesday, leading police to pepper-spray at least one of the crowds. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Annan makes progress in Syria peace talks

UN envoy Kofi Annan said Tuesday he has received the backing of both Syria and China for his plan for a negotiated end to the bloody Syrian conflict.

Annan believes Syria's acceptance of the peace plan is an important first step that now needs to be immediately implemented, his spokesman said.

A Paris-based member of the opposition Syrian National Council said it welcomes the Syrian government's decision.

"We hope that we can move toward a peace process," Bassma Kodmani said by telephone.

Annan, who is also an envoy for the Arab League, told reporters after meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in Beijing on Tuesday that he had received a "positive" response from Syria as well as support from China.

He said he received a similar commitment from Russia over the weekend.

"We've had very good discussions about the situation in Syria. And they have offered me their full support," Annan said after the meeting with Wen.

Wen said work on a solution to the crisis is at a "critical juncture," adding that China backed Annan's mediation efforts.

The support from China and Russia may have been important in nudging Syria on the plan, which has been endorsed by the UN Security Council in a non-binding presidential statement.

China and Russia have twice vetoed proposed UN sanctions over Assad's crackdown on a yearlong uprising in which more than 8,000 people are believed to have died.

The two countries called those proposed UN resolutions unbalanced. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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Congressional forum

Trayvon Martin's parents on Capitol Hill as outrage persists over killing

Trayvon Martin's parents, father, Tracy Martin, and Sybrina Fulton. JACQUELYN MARTIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The parents of Trayvon Martin, the 17-year-old gunned down by a neighbourhood-watch volunteer who believed he looked suspicious, are on Capitol Hill on Tuesday to attend a congressional forum looking into racial profiling and hate crimes.

Their visit to the U.S. capital comes as the nationwide uproar over their unarmed son's death enters a sadly typical phase in many high-profile, emotionally charged American crime cases: blaming the victim.

Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton believe their son, wearing a hoodie and walking in a gated Florida community on a rainy February night, aroused George Zimmerman's suspicions because of his race.

Zimmerman, a white Hispanic, says he acted in self-defence. He claims the youth beat him prior to the shooting after he followed Martin in his SUV despite a 9-11 dispatcher telling him not to do so.

Martin and Fulton have accused the man's lawyers and local police of a smear campaign in recent days as investigators face an ever-growing barrage of criticism for failing make an arrest in the Feb. 26 shooting.

"They've killed my son, and now they're trying to kill his reputation," Fulton said this week.

Democrats organized Tuesday's Capitol Hill event. It was uncertain whether any Republican lawmakers would be in attendance.

The congressional forum is not only focusing on racial profiling and hate crimes, but also on Florida's so-called Stand Your Ground law, which essentially allows people to use deadly force if they feel threatened.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

U.S. justices sound alarm bells over health-care reform

Obamacare in peril. Supreme Court conservatives question constitutionality of democrats' mandatory coverage proposal

Amy Brighton from Medina, Ohio, rallies in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday. CHARLES DHARAPAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The U.S. Supreme Court's more conservative justices sharply questioned a core provision of President Barack Obama's historic healthcare reforms Tuesday, raising doubts about the fate of the requirement that all Americans must buy insurance coverage or face a penalty.

The court's ruling on the constitutionality of the law — expected in June, during the heat of the presidential re-election campaign — will affect the lives of nearly every American and stands to deepen already wide ideological divisions.

Justices pressed the government's lawyer about the right of Congress to force Americans to buy a product.

"If the government can do that, what else can it" do? asked Justice Antonin Scalia, referring to the individual-mandate portion of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The Democrat-appointed liberal minority of four justices was expected to vote to uphold the Obama plan. But a ruling in favour of the law would require at least one of the five conservative, Republican-appointed judges to break ranks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cold War time warp

Russian president rebukes Romney

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Tuesday sharply suggested that Mitt Romney use his head and remember what year he's living in after the Republican presidential contender said Moscow was America's "No. 1 geopolitical foe."

Romney described Russia in those terms while criticizing President Barack Obama for his caught-on-tape remarks to Medvedev that he would have more room to negotiate on missile defence if he is re-elected in November.

During a briefing Tuesday in Seoul, where he and Obama were attending a nuclear security summit, the Russian leader said Romney's remarks "smacked of Hollywood" and also added the comments sounded as if they came from the Cold War era.

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French President Nicolas Sarkozy delivers a speech to magistrates and policemen who took part in the investigations into the attacks on seven people and siege of gunman Mohamed Merah's house. KENZO TRIBOUILLARD/POOL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police fear French gunman had help

Accomplice? A video of attacks on soldiers and Jewish school sent to news network by unknown individual

A video apparently showing a Muslim gunman's attacks on soldiers and a Jewish school was sent to the Al-Jazeera news network — but not by him, French police said Tuesday, raising the spectre of a possible accomplice.

Al-Jazeera on Tuesday decided not to air a video that seems to have been filmed from the killer's point of view and includes the cries of his victims.

The decision came after French President Nicolas Sarkozy asked the news network not to broadcast the video.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Video

- A French official said the video was not sent by Merah, 23, who died in a police shootout.
- Another official said the envelope sent to Al-Jazeera contained postmarks from a large postal processing centre for the area around Toulouse.

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Facebook suicide shocks the world

Gruesome chat. No one alerts police; some beg woman to stop

A woman in Taiwan killed herself by inhaling poisonous fumes while chatting with friends on Facebook, and none of them alerted authorities, police said Tuesday.

Claire Lin killed herself on her 31st birthday, March 18, and family members who reported her suicide were unaware of the Facebook conversations that accompanied it, Taipei police officer Hsieh Ku-ming said.

Lin's last Facebook entries show her chatting with nine friends, alerting them to her gradual asphyxiation. One picture uploaded from her cellphone depicts a charcoal barbecue burning next to two stuffed animals. Another shows the room filled with fumes.

One friend, identified as Chung Hsin, told Lin, "Be calm, open the window, put out the charcoal fire, please, I beg you."

Lin replied: "The fumes are suffocating. They fill my eyes with tears. Don't write me anymore."

A few of the Facebook friends chatting with her tried to stop her and track her down on their own, but none called police. Chung did not respond to attempts to reach him for comment.

Lin's last words, in Chinese, were: "Too late. My room is filled with fumes. I just posted another picture. Even while I'm dying, I still want FB (Facebook). Must be FB poison. Haha."

Lin's Facebook postings indicated she was unhappy because her boyfriend was ignoring her and had failed to return home to be with her on her birthday. Her boyfriend found her body the next morning and alerted her family, Hsieh said.

Hsieh said he regretted that none of her friends called police during the 67-minute episode, but he added it may have been difficult for them to know her whereabouts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Social isolation

Chai Ben-rei, of Taiwan's Feng Chia University, said the incident reflects social isolation in the Internet age.

- "People may have doubts about what they see on the Internet because of its virtual nature, and fail to take action on it."

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Socks, hope and love

Balloons carrying a package of socks and messages of hope and love for North Korea float toward the country near the Unification Observatory Post in Paju, South Korea, yesterday.

EUGENE HOSHIKO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fraud. U.S. soldier accused of defrauding Microsoft co-founder

A U.S. soldier's alleged scheme to defraud one of the world's richest men has landed him in federal custody.

In a criminal complaint unsealed Monday, federal investigators allege Brandon Lee Price changed the address on a bank account held by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, then had a debit card sent to his home so he could use it for payments on a delinquent Armed Forces Bank account and personal expenses.

Price was absent without leave at the time.

Price called Citibank in January and changed the address on an account held by Allen from Seattle to Pittsburgh, then called back three days later to say he'd lost his debit card and asked for a new one to be sent to him, an FBI investigator said.

Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen.
ELAINE THOMPSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A spokesman for Allen, said the fraud was detected by the bank.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Summit aims to secure all nuclear material by 2014

Security risk. Some countries have struggled to secure their stocks or have ties to militant groups

South Korean President Lee Myungbak THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Material that can be used to make nuclear bombs is stored in scores of buildings spread across dozens of countries.

Nearly 60 world leaders who gathered Tuesday in Seoul for a nuclear security summit agreed to work on securing and accounting for all nuclear material by 2014.

But widespread fear lingers about the safety of nuclear material in countries including former Soviet states, Pakistan, North Korea, Iran and India.

While the threat of nuclear terrorism is considered lower now than a decade ago, especially after the death of Osama bin Laden, the nightmare scenario of a terrorist exploding a nuclear bomb in a major city isn't necessarily the far-fetched stuff of movies.

"It would not take much, just a handful or so of these materials, to kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people and that's not an exaggeration — that's the reality that we face," President Barack Obama told world leaders at the meeting.

Building a nuclear weapon isn't easy, but a bomb similar to the one that obliterated Hiroshima is "very plausibly within the capabilities of a sophisticated terrorist group," according to Matthew Bunn, an associate professor at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

The Nuclear Threat Initiative, a Washington-based non-proliferation group that tracks the security of world nuclear stockpiles, said in a January report that 32 countries have weapons-usable nuclear materials.

Some countries, such as the United States, maintain strict controls already. However others, including Russia and other former Soviet republics, have struggled to secure their stocks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nuclear bomb

Terrorist detonation not 'end of the world'

Hollywood has destroyed Washington — or New York or L.A. — many times with nuclear bombs detonated by terrorists. It turns out to be harder in real life.

A U.S. government study analyzed the likely effects from terrorists setting off a 10-kiloton nuclear device a few blocks north of the White House.

It predicted terrible devastation for roughly one kilometre in every direction, with buildings reduced to rubble the way that Second World War bombing raids destroyed parts of Berlin.

But outside that blast zone, the study concluded, even such a nuclear explosion would be pretty survivable.

"It's not the end of the world," said Randy Larsen, a retired Air Force colonel and founding director of the Institute for Homeland Security. "It's not a Cold War scenario."

The government study predicted 323,000 injuries, with more than 45,000 dead. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Surgery. Man gets new face in most extensive transplant on record

A 37-year-old U.S. man injured in a 1997 gun accident has been given a new face, teeth, tongue and jaw in what doctors say is the most extensive face transplant ever performed.

University of Maryland Medical Center officials announced Tuesday that Richard Norris is recovering well after last week's surgery, beginning to feel his face and already brushing his teeth and shaving. He's also regained his sense of smell, which he had lost after the accident.

Norris has spent the past 15 years living as a recluse, and the transplant will give him his life back, said lead surgeon Dr. Eduardo Rodriguez.

"Before, people used to stare at Richard because he wore a mask and they wanted to see the deformity," Rodriguez said. "Now, they have another reason to stare at him, and it's really amazing."

The 36-hour operation was the most extensive because it included transplantation of the teeth, tongue, upper and lower jaw and all facial tissue from the scalp to the base of the neck, Rodriguez said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

University of Maryland Medical Center doctors discuss the most extensive full face transplant completed to date, performed on Richard Lee Norris, pictured at right, during a news conference Tuesday. GAIL BURTON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Real estate

U.S. housing prices keep falling: Index

Home prices fell in January for a fifth straight month in most major U.S. cities, as modest sales increases have yet to boost prices.

The Standard & Poor's Case-Shiller home-price index released Tuesday showed that prices dropped in January from December in 16 of 19 cities tracked. The steepest declines were in San Francisco, Atlanta and Portland. Prices increased in Miami, Phoenix and Washington. Price information for Charlotte was delayed and therefore not included in the report.

The declines partly reflect typical off-season sales. The month-over-month data are not adjusted for seasonal factors. Still, prices fell in 17 of the 20 cities in January compared to the same month in 2011. The group's nationwide index of prices has fallen 34 per cent since the housing bust and is now at 2002 levels. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

In a Monday, Feb. 20, 2012 photo, a home is for sale in North Andover, Mass. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Outlook

America confident about economy

Americans' rosy outlook about the economy remains resilient, despite mixed economic signs. Consumer confidence barely budged in March after last month hitting the highest level in a year. The stock market is up, but gas prices are too. Unemployment is falling, but home prices are also declining. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

WHO treaty. Member states set to crack down on tobacco smuggling

A large chunk of the world is closing in on a treaty to crack down on tobacco smuggling, a practice that is estimated to cost governments up to $50 billion US in tax revenue each year, the World Health Organization said Tuesday.

Diplomats from 174 WHO members states are expected to have a draft treaty when they meet in South Korea in November, the global body said. A handful of countries, including the United States, Indonesia, Argentina, Switzerland and 15 others, are not participating in the negotiations, meaning the treaty wouldn't apply there.

Negotiators meeting in Geneva on Thursday still need to bridge differences on issues such as duty free and Internet sales, supply chain tracking and extradition of alleged smugglers. A key part of the treaty is a planned tracking system that will require all cigarette packages to be marked in such a way that customs officials can trace their origin. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Taking aim at competitor

CP Rail president and CEO Fred Green speaks in Calgary in this May 12, 2011, file photo. Green took direct aim Tuesday at Hunter Harrison, his erstwhile counterpart at the railroad's biggest rival and the man an activist investor wants to install in his place.

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pipelines. Enbridge to invest $4B to extend oil transport to Gulf Coast

The race to ship crude to Gulf Coast refineries has intensified, as Enbridge Inc. announced plans to invest nearly $4 billion on two expanded U.S. pipeline proposals. Canada's largest crude transporter said Monday its proposed Seaway project between the oversupplied Cushing, Okla., storage hub and the Gulf will be scaled up by 450,000 barrels per day, bringing that project's total capacity to 850,000 barrels per day. The Flanagan South line has been expanded to a 36-diameter line with a capacity of 585,000 barrels per day. Together with its existing Spearhead pipeline, customers will be able to ship 775,000 barrels per day from Flanagan, Ill., to Cushing. Western Canada and the booming Bakken region of Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Montana will have "timely, economical and reliable options to deliver a variety of crudes ... throughout the heart of North America and now as far as the Gulf Coast," said CEO Pat Daniel. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Eurozone needs at least a trillion euros: OECD

The 17 countries that use the euro need to build a one-trillion-euro ($1.29-trillion US) firewall to help the struggling currency union return to growth, the head of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said Tuesday.

Angel Gurria, the secretary-general of the Paris-based international-development body, said existing plans for a 500-billion-euro European rescue fund were not enough to restore market confidence.

"The mother of all firewalls should be in place," Gurria told a news conference in Brussels, where he was flanked by Olli Rehn, the EU's economic affairs commissioner.

A permanent bailout fund of at least one trillion euros would give governments the breathing space to focus on kick-starting growth and restoring the competitiveness of their economies, Gurria added.

According to the OECD's annual report for the eurozone, vulnerable states may need more aid in the next two years. Gurria said a decision to boost bailout funds should be made at a meeting in Copenhagen on Friday. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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COLORADO KIDS GET EGGED ON

JUST SAYIN'
Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca/justsaying

This is a story about an Easter egg hunt.

Of course, this is me, so it's a story about an Easter egg hunt gone horribly wrong.

The annual Easter egg hunt in Colorado Springs was called off this year because last year a mob of crazed parents leaped over the rope into an area restricted to kids and gathered up all the eggs before the kids knew what was happening.

When asked to explain his shocking behaviour, one dad explained: "You better believe I'm going to help my kid get one of those eggs. I promise my kid an Easter egg hunt, and I'd want to give him an even edge," he told The Associated Press.

Parents on the hunt

"We've come a long way from the days when my generation was growing up: our parents used to throw us out of the cave in the morning with instructions to go and frolic with the mastodons and the sabre-toothed tigers while they pursued their Mad Men dreams and schemes."

Left groping to explain all those adults gone wild, one expert blames "helicopter parents" and "millennial children." Today's parents, so the theory goes, are so anxious to prevent little Logan or Olivia from experiencing Early Disappointment Syndrome (I made that up) they'll turn an Easter egg hunt into blood sport. If Olivia falls victim to EDS, her self-esteem will suffer and she won't be able to get into the best schools and take her rightful place among the Masters and Mistresses of the Universe.

It's the same at the rink, the soccer pitch, the birthday party, dance class and wherever else helicopter parents hover. My favourite is that millennial kids are now taking their parents to their job interviews so that Mr. and Ms. Helicopter can make sure Olivia gets a fair shake during the interview and the inevitable negotiation that follows.

We've come a long way from the days when my generation was growing up: our parents used to throw us out of the cave in the morning with instructions to go and frolic with the mastodons and the sabre-toothed tigers while they pursued their Mad Men dreams and schemes.

I swear we would play entire seasons of hockey outdoors — and never see a single parent standing on the snow banks, which makes sense, as your face would freeze after a minute's exposure to the wind chill. I used to take big hits in the hope I would get injured and be able to go into the shack and sit next to the heater.

Now kids play in world-class arenas or stadiums, complete with team doctors and publicists. And a squadron of helicopter parents, hovering in formation like killer bees.

Making sure nothing interesting happens to their kids.

But let's see what I can do. Kid? Listen up. There's no such thing as the Easter Bunny anyway.

We know of some unlucky kids who won't be getting an Easter egg hunt this year. GETTY IMAGES

A blast from the past

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER.
ROOSEVELT LOSING, POLITICIANS BIGGEST
BIGELOW REBUKED IN BITTER BATTLE
105 DEAD, BURIED BY BLAST IN MINE
COAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDS SLOWLY

A copy of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, dated Thursday, March 21, 1912, is held up after the opening of a time capsule buried 100 years ago at GE Lighting's Nela Park world headquarters Monday in Cleveland. TONY DEJAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TONY DEJAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A bright idea

Five of the century-old light bulbs placed next to a time capsule buried 100 years ago at GE's Lighting's Nela Park world headquarters Monday in Cleveland. Enclosed in the time capsule were also historical lighting-industry brochures and other artifacts.

TONY DEJAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

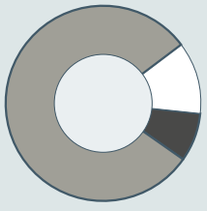
The board

A photo of GE's board of directors in 1912 is held up.

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

What did you think of the Mad Men season premiere?



80% I DIDN'T WATCH

12% LOVED IT

8% DIDN'T LIVE UP TO THE HYPE

Twitter

@LUONGOLD1:
Makes me angry that the entire city of Vancouver has to pay for the senseless acts of the hooligans of last year's riots #canucks

@Alvinlala:
I seriously wonder why they won't use BC Place. Putting 54,000+ #Canucks fans in one stadium is manageable. Very manageable.

@Hockeyxdreams:
Hey #canucks fans, at least you can party. #habs don't even make the playoffs lol! #notthatfunny

@dalvirdhillon19:
No public screenings downtown for the playoffs this year? Can't say I'm surprised. Thanks "fans". Thanks a lot. #Canucks

@mozy19:
Honest question. Can you blame the city for not having big plans for the playoffs based on what happened last year? #Canucks #YVR

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Billy Zane starred opposite Kate Winslet in Titanic. CONTRIBUTED

Titanic was a 'game changer'

An interview with Billy Zane. The Titanic baddie returns, only this time in 3D

KIERON MONKS
scene@metronews.ca

It's been 15 years since Titanic reduced us all to sobbing wrecks, and smashed box-office records.

Now James Cameron's classic is being reissued in eye-popping 3D and we caught up with its sharp-suited villain Cal Hockley, also known as Billy Zane.

How did the original Titanic change your life?
It was an incredible calling card. Titanic was an invitation to the tables of sovereign leaders for whatever you wanted to leverage, in my case charities. It was a game-changer, and a great honour to be canonized in the pantheon of significant movies.

Having played such a villain — are you worried about a new wave of unpopularity with the 3D release?
Oh, been there, done that, I'm well versed from the first time.

There's actually been a new perspective on Cal. Perhaps revisiting the movie has helped people see him through a different lens and have more sympathy.

You're not experiencing hostility?
Men say I was a terrible shot and women are in two camps. The ones who were swept up in Leo-mania and can't believe I was in the way of true love, and the slyer ones with an appetite for jewelry who thought Rose was mad to leave Cal.

The most important thing for me was to mine understanding. The burden of the era was placed upon him too; he had a lot to manage. Collectively we were always analyzing, looking for opportunities to disarm the audience.

Does a real man make his own luck?
But of course.

Would you have liked anything about living in 1912?
Life before cellphones! Also the lost art of craftsmanship. I miss things being well made. Architecture and craftsmanship standards in general have fallen.

How do you and the ocean get along?
I forged my career at sea in Dead Calm, where I played a nutter on a boat. I do well at sea, the boats just got bigger. In real life? It makes it very hard to charter one.

What will audiences get out of this reissue?
It depends what audience. Most have seen the film before, so they're going in with comforting expectation.

It's much like seeing an anthem band from the 1980s; waiting for the big hit, fired up nostalgically for when the first chord hits and you're transported to a time and place.

The device of 3D allows the filmmaker to keep the audience off balance — it's an unpredictable space that allows heartstrings to be manipulated.

After 3D, what other new forms of Titanic could be created?
I think a role-play game in real time from the moment of impact or just before is probably something they might consider.

It's easy to forget this is all based on a historic tragedy. How has all this affected you?
More so than before. I saw a segment of the voyage on the (BBC) One Show I had never seen before. While watching it I had a very uneasy feeling. For the original, the tragedy hadn't hit me. We were always caught up in the artifice of film. Now it's different, I feel the weight.

2 SCENE

Scene in brief

Is that Harry Potter on your Kindle?

At last, Harry Potter's adventures are available electronically. The seven novels about J.K. Rowling's boy wizard are for sale as ebooks and audio books on the author's Pottermore website, the site's creators announced Tuesday. The books are currently available in English, in U.S. and U.K. editions, priced at $7.99 for ebooks and $29.99 for audio versions. The Harry Potter novels have sold 450 million copies, but Rowling for years resisted making the books available in digital form. She announced last year that Potter ebooks would be sold through the Pottermore site, an interactive portal into Harry's magical world.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the Web

Man pleads guilty in Los Angeles in celebrity hacking case involving Christina Aguilera, Scarlett Johansson

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Simon Cowell

Crazed fan goes after X Factor creator Simon Cowell

Simon Cowell had a close encounter with an obsessed fan when a brick-wielding woman broke into his London home and came face to face with the X Factor boss before getting nabbed by his on-site security, according to the Washington Post.

"It came from the bathroom, so he went in," Max Clifford, Cowell's spokesperson, said in a statement.

"She had smashed her way in through the window, and it was unclear how long she had been there or what she was doing."

Clifford adds that Cowell was shaken by the scare.

"It was a very frightening experience for Simon, who told me it was like something from a horror movie," he says.

Getting smashed

"She had smashed her way in through the window, and it was unclear how long she had been there or what she was doing."

Max Clifford, Cowell's spokesperson

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Hollywood women love the bad boy

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

In a recent column, I brought up the news that everyone's favourite '90s goth (besides blood-sucking era Angelina Jolie), Marilyn Manson, is dating chanteuse Lana Del Rey. And, perhaps it was shallow of me, but I asked what it was about the creepy rocker that attracted some of Hollywood's most beautiful women (Rose McGowan, Dita Von Teese, Evan Rachel Wood are three of his most famous conquests). Luckily, you wrote in:

"The best I can do is remember that ignorance is a natural part of the human process."

"He's creepy outwardly, I'll grant you and beyond strange. He is also intelligent, well spoken, charming (when he wants to be) and masculine (despite the make-up and freaky gender-bending BDSM clothing)…. He's good at making interesting conversation and accomplished at drawing women in. A fine predator of the male species."

"The answer is so simple that you missed it completely! Ask yourself how Ric Ocasek got Paulina? The reason you don't get it is that you are not a fan of Marilyn Manson. Your biased view inhibits your clarity."

My biased view? No. It's just curious. I'd like to file this under that weird phenomenon of how once-popular Hollywood men whose careers are currently on a downward slide—see: Wilmer Valderrama; Macaulay Culkin — still get so many successful, hot girlfriends and George Clooney gets a former WWE wrestler. Ladies, I'd like a word.

Fergie

Fergie wants to add peas to her family pod

After three years of marriage to Josh Duhamel, Fergie is up for having kids — just not now.

"It's not happening yet, I can tell you that definitely," Fergie says, according to Hollyscoop. "But we want to have a family, so that's in the cards, but it's just not this second."

The continued wait has to do with the fact that, with a lighter Black Eyed Peas schedule, the singer finally has time to spend with her husband.

"Eight years of being on the road, and now I've been off the road, what, five months?" she says.

"I'm enjoying this time of just being home for that long a period."

Twitter

@MileyCyrus
I'm not engaged. I've worn this same ring on this finger since November! People just wanna find something to talk about! It's a topaz people!

@andersoncooper
I just started running again, but don't think I could do a marathon

@KChenoweth
I wish it was my bday today. I need a present.

@ConanOBrien
Got my oil changed downtown just so I could tweet something that sounded dirty.

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There's lots to love about Paris in springtime

French immersion.
As the days get longer and the sun warms the city, now is the time to let your love for France blossom

AURÉLIE RESCH
travel@metronews.ca

Spring is in the air. Students are out night and day, lovers cuddle on benches in the city's parks, the atmosphere is serene and the pace in Paris is pretty relaxed as days get longer.

As I stroll along the shores of La Seine, I can't help thinking of the light spirited Woody Allen movie. Like Gil, the main character of Midnight in Paris, I embrace everything I come across in the French capital with delight and gratitude.

The soft light playing on the glass panels of the Louvre pyramids is a painting worth as much as the most notorious exhibited inside. Talking with the booksellers by the Seine in order to find a copy of an ancient manuscript brings me joy.

March is a lazy month with unpredictable mood swings. As it gets warmer during the day, I look for some shade in le Jardin du Luxembourg.

In this great recreational park of the 5th arrondissement (district) of Paris, I take pleasure in looking at children playing with miniature sailboats on the main basin and at the statues scattered in the park picturing romance, love, desire and revenge (I imagine).

A sudden shower pushes me down in the subway heading to the Quai Branly for an escape to the museum of cultures and civilizations. This fascinating place created by former French president Jacques Chirac offers a complete, clever and well displayed collection of craft, arts and history that reflects the richness and variety of the many cultures around the world.

As the night falls, the rain has stopped and the temperature is still good enough to hang out. I walk up the Champs Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe, just because it feels great to stroll along this notorious avenue and I stop at the Fouquet's to enjoy a meal in a very expensive café, looking at ecstatic tourists and young families heading back home.

Then I head to Place de l'Odéon to have dinner in one of the numerous restaurants in this tiny passage where artists, students and wealthy people meet and talk through the night. I have a hard decision to make: should I sit at Le Procope, a Parisian institution, or opt for the friendly atmosphere and the amazing desert of La Jacobine?

As if the excellent meal was not enough to please my palate, I walk up on Saint Germain to stop at the chocolate boutique of famous maître-chocolatier Larnicol. I indulge in delicacies in this chocolate palace.

It's now time to burn it off with some jazz. The Quartier Latin is a vibrant place where life is bustling and the night is always young. There are plenty of clubs to listen to music in and many opportunities to mingle with a happy crowd.

The city offers it all: elegant architecture, fancy stores and interesting urban sketches… Yes, indeed, the Parisian cliché is a delightful experience!

Maybe love will strike at the corner of a café or on the sidewalk of Notre Dame and just like for Gil; a young charismatic stranger will turn my Parisian experience into a romance.

People enjoy the spring weather outside the Louvre. ZOETNET/FLICKR

Maybe love will strike you at the Arc de Triomphe or on the sidewalk of Notre Dame this spring. FLICKR

3 LIFE

Stamp

Queen puts stamp on exhibit

Regular mail — the kind with a stamp on it — isn't the everyday fact of life it used to be. And that means we might not get to see the Queen as often as Canadians did in the past. The Canadian Postal Museum in Gatineau, Que., is marking Elizabeth's diamond jubilee with an exhibition of over 600 stamps issued since 1952 that bear her likeness. "This collection of postal portraits provides an excellent historical account of one of many examples of the Queen's presence in the everyday lives of Canadians," Heritage Minister James Moore said in a release.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the Web

Beagle at Kennedy Airport sniffs out contraband food hidden in international luggage

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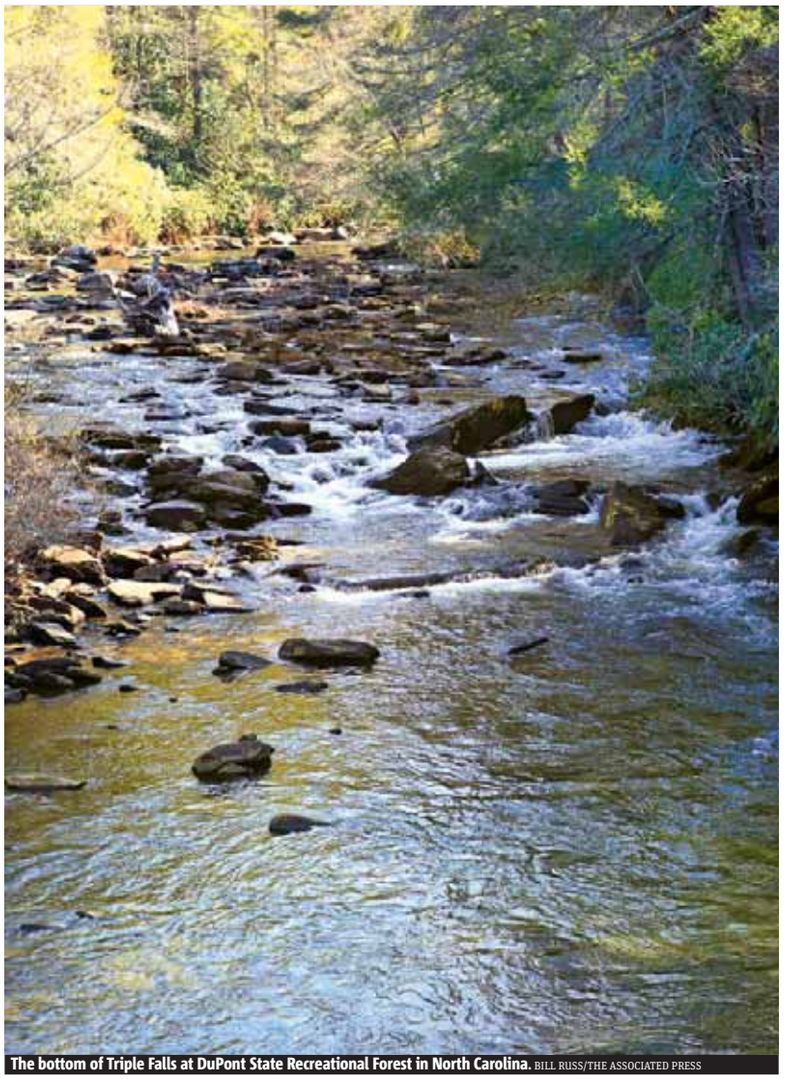
North Carolina braces for Hunger Games tourism



The bottom of Triple Falls at DuPont State Recreational Forest in North Carolina. BILL RUSS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This house, in the Henry River Mill Village, was fitted as the Everdeens' home in the Hunger Games. MARGO METZGER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This building in was used as the bakery.
MARGO METZGER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cashing in on craze.
Tour 'District 12,' learn about survival and watch re-enactments of scenes from the film on special tours

Fans of The Hunger Games are already turning up in North Carolina, seeking out places where the movie was shot, from old-growth forests to an abandoned mill town.

And the tourism industry is prepared to cash in on them, with everything from hotel packages and zip line tours, to re-enactments of scenes from the film and lessons in survival skills.

The movie, which opened last weekend, is based on a bestselling book about a post-apocalyptic world where teenagers compete to the death in fighting games.

It was filmed entirely in North Carolina, from the mountains, where fake trees were planted, filled with propane and blown up, to Charlotte, which served as the Capitol from the story — the seat of power where the teens are sent for training.

Also prominently featured in the movie is the Henry River Mill Village near Hildebran, about 115 kilometres from Asheville, which was the setting for District 12, home of the three main characters, Katniss, Peeta and Gale.

Although the mill burned down in 1977, the 20-plus remaining buildings, including the company store, make it look like a ghost town.

The village is private property, and the local sheriff's department is working with private security guards to keep people away, concerned about liability if someone gets hurt.

But fans are already coming. "I'm getting too many visitors," said the property owner, Wade Shepherd, 83, who hasn't read The Hunger Games.

"Day and night, they're driving through, taking pictures, getting out and walking. I'm just bombarded with people."

North Carolina's trees also figure prominently in the movie. At first, pine trees tall enough to suit the filmmakers' needs couldn't be found. But Pam Lewis, film commissioner in the western part of the state when Lionsgate, the film company, was scoping out locations, found a 22,000-acre forest of old-growth trees in Asheville's watershed, and that's where the movie's arena scenes were filmed. The public isn't allowed in this protected watershed area, but plenty of other forests are open to visitors.

Filmmakers spent more than $60 million on The Hunger Games in North Carolina, and employed about 5,000 people, including stars, extras and crews, making it the largest movie ever made here. Other famous movies filmed in the state include Dirty Dancing, The Last of the Mohicans and Bull Durham.

The Hunger Games is based on the first book from author Suzanne Collins' bestselling trilogy.

The state Division of Tourism has designed a four-day self-guided tour for fans of the movie. The first day includes stops at the Henry River Mill Village plus places where the stars hung out in Asheville. Next on the itinerary is DuPont State Recreational Forest near Brevard where the arena scenes were filmed, followed by Shelby, where reaping scenes were shot in private warehouse space. A final day in Charlotte includes the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center's Knight Theater, where interview scenes with the teenage "tributes" were filmed.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"Day and night, they're driving through ... I'm just bombarded with people."

Wade Shepherd, property owner in the Henry River Mill Village in North Carolina, the location where scenes from The Hunger Games were shot.

For diehard fans

Re-enact a scene

A company called Hunger Games Fan Tours offers day and weekend trips to waterfalls and other spots in Transylvania County. As part of the tour, actors re-enact some of the scenes shot there and guests are served food described in the story. Visit hungergamesfantours.com.

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My favourite place in Canada

Alan Bishop loves Brooks

In my travels I am often asked what is my favourite place in Canada and I then have to stop the flood of memories that fill my head. There are so many amazing spots to choose from across our great nation.

I have wonderful memories of climbing in the majestic mountains found in Jasper National Park, or quietly paddling in the serenity of the lakes in Kejimkujik National Park. But if I had to pick a favourite it would have to be on the coastal white sand beaches of The Brooks Peninsula on Vancouver Island. This relatively unknown spot is wild, rugged and possibly the most beautiful place on earth.

If you enjoy kayaking, surfing, hiking, fishing, beach combing or just gazing into the beauty of everything West Coast, then the "Brooks" is the place to be. I have been lucky enough to spend more than 100 days on this amazing bit of wilderness and I would go again at the drop of a hat.

ALAN BISHOP IS THE HOST OF OPERATION UNPLUGGED. CATCH THE OPERATION UNPLUGGED MARATHON ON SATURDAY, MARCH 31 FROM 2-8 PM ON TRAVEL+ESCAPE. TRAVELANDESCAPE.CA

Skip the fattening cream and butter — and rethink a classic turkey casserole

Ingredients

- 375 g (12 oz) whole-grain spaghetti, broken into pieces
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) canola oil
- 250 g (8 oz) cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut into pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, cored and diced
- 10 ml (2 tsp) onion powder, divided
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) paprika, divided
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) dry sherry
- 750 ml (3 cups) cubed cooked turkey breast
- 500 ml (2 cups) fat-free half-and-half
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) instant-blend flour
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) grated Parmesan cheese
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) panko breadcrumbs
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) garlic powder
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) chopped fresh parsley

1. Heat oven to 200 C (400 F). Coat a large casserole dish with cooking spray.

2. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil and cook spaghetti according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

3. In a large skillet over medium-high, heat oil. Add mushrooms and garlic, then season with salt and black pepper. Sauté until mushrooms are well browned and release all their liquid, about 10 minutes. Add asparagus and red pepper and cook for another 4 minutes.

4. Stir in 5 ml (1 tsp) of the onion powder, 5 ml (1 tsp) of the paprika and sherry. Cook for 1 minute, then remove from heat. Add turkey and set aside.

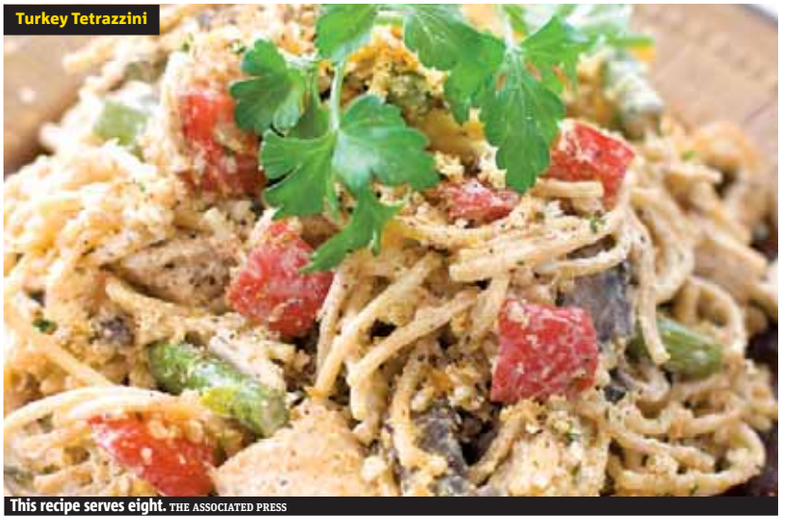
5. In a small saucepan over low heat, bring half-and-half to a simmer. Whisk in instant-blend flour, then bring to a boil. Cook until thickened, about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat and stir in Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper.

6. In a small bowl, stir together panko, garlic powder, parsley, remaining 5 ml (1 tsp) onion powder and remaining 2 ml (1/2 tsp) paprika.

7. To assemble casserole, stir cooked spaghetti and cream sauce into skillet with turkey and vegetables. Spoon mixture into prepared casserole dish, then sprinkle seasoned panko over it. Spritz top of panko crumbs with cooking spray and bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until golden.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Turkey Tetrazzini



This recipe serves eight. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Drink of the week

Skyy Spring Fling

- Skyy vodka
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- 0.25 oz simple syrup
- Juice of half a lemon
- Starfruit
- Sparkling wine

Muddle a starfruit in shaker. Add remaining ingredients, except sparkling wine, and shake to combine. Strain into a champagne flute. Top with sparkling wine and garnish with a slice of starfruit.

SKYY SPIRITS

Andrew Johnson has the job you wanted when you were six years old

LEGO legend. For this young man, the building blocks to success have been bright, shiny and stackable

MONICA WEYMOUTH
Metro World News in Philadelphia

Evidently, confidence in your ability will help you stand out from some tough competition. ISTOCK

As the new Master Model Builder of LEGOLAND Discovery Center Chicago, 23-year-old Andrew Johnson designs 3D LEGO models for the families that visit.

Last week, he completed his first display since starting full-time at the beginning of the month.

"I just made a cardinal — that's the state bird of Illinois," he tells us. "It's a lot of fun to be able to design something and watch it come into creation so fast."

Plenty of aspects of the job could be described as "a lot of fun," which is why the position isn't easy to come by.

There are only four master model builders in the U.S. and an additional eight abroad.

Johnson landed the gig after competing against eight other finalist applicants in a "build-off," during which he created a replica of Chicago's Daley Plaza Picasso sculpture, a model of the Lorax using less than 40 LEGO pieces and an especially tricky audience-member request: a violin and a hands-free harmonica.

For now, Johnson — who is one credit shy of a degree in history from DePaul University — isn't concerned with big-picture career questions or especially eager to join his friends in the cubicles.

"It's one of the only toys I can think of that you don't grow out of," Johnson says of LEGOs.

"I'm going to stay here as long as I'm having fun — which I can see being a long time."

Piece by piece

His building style

Johnson has been playing with LEGOs since he was a child, but sharpened his skills while working at a camp where the toys were used to teach architecture and engineering. "There are people who have a lot of kits, but I'm more of a free-builder – I haven't used instructions in a long time," he says. "I don't buy kits, just the basic building blocks. It's a lot of trial and error."

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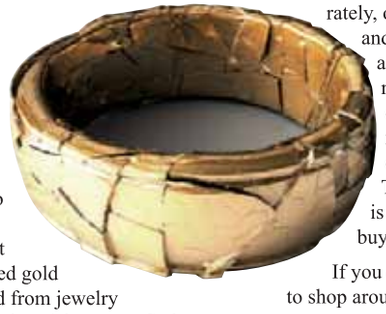
WHEN TO SELL YOUR GOLD

WITH THE PRICE OF GOLD APPARENTLY DESTINED TO REMAIN AT ALL-TIME HIGHS, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO CASH IN ON JEWELRY, COINS AND OTHER PIECES THAT CONTAIN THE PRECIOUS METAL

Although the price of an ounce of gold has dropped significantly since November 2011, it still stands at more than $1,600, a three-fold increase since 2006. Given these prices, it should come as no surprise to learn that the market for recycled gold (recovered from jewelry and other pieces) is strong. So how can you tell when the time is right to sell your gold?



People tend to buy gold either as an investment (e.g. gold bars, coins) or as an expression of affection (wedding ring, necklace, watch). For people who bought gold as an investment, deciding to sell can be relatively easy; if the value of your gold has increased enough and you feel you can do better by investing the money elsewhere, it's clearly time to sell. For those who bought gold for sentimental reasons, though, it can be a much harder decision. How do you feel about the piece now? If you sell, will you miss it a few years down the road? Bottom line: if the feeling's gone, so too is the reason for keeping the piece.

WHY SELL?

The most common reason people sell gold, of course, is that they need the money. Another reason to sell is if the gold is in a piece of jewellery that is damaged or broken. If you have earrings without mates, for instance, a brooch with a clasp that no longer closes, an old watch that no longer tells time accurately, or a chain that is too twisted and kinked to wear, it may be a good time to sell. Jewelry repairs can be prohibitively expensive. A third common reason to sell is that the jewelry has gone out of style. The market for older jewelry is small, while there are many buyers for precious metals.

If you do choose to sell, make sure to shop around for a reputable buyer.

– Peter Doyle

WHAT DO GOLD BUYERS LOOK FOR?

A gold piece usually has a hallmark — a stamp identifying the percentage of gold it contains. Look for these hallmarks: 8kt, 9kt, 10kt, 14kt, 18kt, 21kt, 22kt 24kt, 417, 585 or 750. Gold buyers will not be interested in pieces marked with 1/10 GF, 1/20 GF, EGP or GP.

FORTUNE OR JUNK?

That box full of jewelry on your dresser could be worth a fortune. On the other hand, it could be junk.

Here are some tips to separate the near worthless costume jewelry from the more precious pieces — and for the most part, you don't need any fancy equipment.

Put a magnet (any one will do, even a fridge magnet) near each piece of jewelry. Precious metals don't stick to a magnet but most costume pieces are made of steel. So if that ring sticks to the magnet, it's probably not worth much.

Use a magnifying glass (again, almost any one will do) to inspect the pieces that didn't stick to the magnet to determine their karat (k). The mark is typically not readily apparent — on the inside of the back of a ring, for example — and may be worn off or too small to see with the naked eye.

Separate the pieces into piles of different karats, as each has a different weight. Gold jewelry can vary from as low as 8 karat to up to 24 k, but in Canada most jewelry is made of 10, 14 or 18 k gold.

Weigh the various pieces separately on a scale that is calibrated in grams. Many ordinary kitchen scales have this capability (gold prices are quoted in troy ounces, each of which is equivalent to 31.1045 grams).

–Pauline Anderson

Don't get ripped off when you sell your gold and silver!

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1 oz gold Maple Leaf	$1,665.74
1 oz. Krugerrand	$1,644.21
Sovereign	$377.33

Antique Jewellery

Silverware

Below is a direct, real comparison of J&M's buying prices with those of a new Vancouver buyer claiming to be the highest buyer

Item/Description	They Pay	J&M Pays
10kt scrap gold, per gram	$16.24	$17.96
14kt scrap gold, per gram	$22.76	$25.23
1 oz. Recognized Gold Bar	$1,579.73	$1,655.52
1 oz. Gold Maple Leaf Coin	$1,612.98	$1,665.74
Sterling Silver, per Gram	$0.68	$0.74
Silver Canadian Coins from 1966 and earlier, per $1 face value	$15.96	$16.96

Prices in this ad based on gold @ U$1,663.21 and silver @ U$32.09 and a USD/CAD exchange rate of 0.998 on March 23, 2012, the day this ad was created.

Silver Coins and Bars

1 oz. silver bar	$32.78
10 oz. silver bar	$330.84
100 oz. silver bar	$3,218.54
1 oz. silver Maple Leaf	$33.13

Watches

Rolex, Vacheron & Constantine, Patek Philipe, Breitling, Omega, Jaeger LeCoultre, Select Cartier, and many other high-end watches.

Canada Collector Coins

1948 $1	$900.00 and up
1890H 50¢	$500.00 and up
1875H 25¢	$200.00 and up
1889 10¢	$350.00 and up
1921 5¢	$4,000.00 and up
1923 1¢	$14.00 and up

Silver Coins *Per $1.00 Face Value*

Canada 1968	$10.35
Canada 1967	$13.23
Canada 1966 and earlier	$16.96
USA 1964 and older	$20.60

Scrap Gold *Per gram*

10kt	$17.96
14kt	$25.23
18kt	$33.29

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FINDING A GOLD BUYER YOU CAN TRUST

Once you've made the decision to sell your gold, how can you find a buyer you can trust? The Canadian Jewellers Association and Jewellers Vigilance Canada offer these helpful tips:

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Know the current price of gold, and the weight and gold percentage of the pieces you want to sell. Gold percentage is calculated in karats — look for the karat stamp on your jewelry. Pure gold (usually only on gold bars) is stamped 24K; a ring stamped 12K is 50 per cent gold. A piece marked 8K and weighing 10 grams contains five grams of gold (less than one-fifth of an ounce). An ounce is slightly more than 28 grams.

UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS

If a company wants you to leave jewelry for evaluation, make sure you get a detailed receipt. Ask if the piece will be sent offsite and how long it will take to get an offer to purchase. Remember, buyers generally pay less than the current market price for gold.

GET AT LEAST THREE QUOTES

A reputable company usually has no qualms about providing free quotes. Be wary of anyone who tries to pressure you into quick sale. Businesses that buy gold in Canada are subject to municipal law. Ask to see their business licence and check their reputation with the Better Business Bureau.

BEWARE OF ONLINE COMPANIES

As with any online transaction, consumers need to be extra cautious when selling gold over the Internet. Always speak with a company representative via telephone and ask the same questions as you would in a store. If you sell to a company outside of Canada, be sure to understand the potential issues with customs clearances and exchange rates.

GEMSTONES ARE NOT INCLUDED

Most companies want only the gold. Ask to keep the stones or get the company to make an offer to buy them separately.

BE CAUTIOUS WHEN SELLING HEIRLOOMS

Be extra careful with jewelry that is more than 50 years old; you may get more money by selling it whole than by recycling the gold it contains.

– Peter Doyle

SHOULD YOU SELL?

You've just inherited your grandmothers gold jewelry. The pieces are expensive but gaudy and you're strapped for money. Should you turn that gold into cash?

"It comes down to this: If you have old jewelry — a broken necklace, a single earring and other stuff you're never, ever, going to use, that's a wasted asset," says Keith Perrin, a Toronto-based gold buyer. "It's just lying there; and most people today have bills they wouldn't mind paying."

And today's gold prices are tempting. Even though they've taken a dip since a peak in the first half of 2009, they're still near an historic high (currently at $1650 per troy ounce for pure or 24 karat gold). Nobody knows if that price will go higher or the bubble will burst.

If you have any sentimental attachment to your jewelry, it's not a good idea to sell it — now or ever. "People are very emotional about jewelry; it represents important moments in their life," says Perrin. "People need to ask themselves, am I really ready to sell this?"

If you do decide to sell, it's important to determine whether your jewelry has more than just scrap value — or has a value above and beyond its melted-down or recycled value. For example, if it's intact and antique, and especially if it has a diamond, it might be resold.

"The question is, does it potentially have what's called "estate value," says Perrin. He uses the example of a diamond engagement ring with an estimated value of $5,000 but the gold is only worth $50. "There's no point in melting that for its gold value."

– Pauline Anderson

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18K	$31.00/G
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22K	$37.85/G
24K	$41.75/G
.916 GOLD COINS	$41.00/G
.999 GOLD COINS	$51.25/G

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.999 SILVER COINS	$.95/G
.925 SILVER COINS	$.85/G
CDN COINS 66 UNDER	$.70/G
CDN COINS 67	$.60/G
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Knowledge is Golden

LEARN THE FACTS AND PROTECT YOURSELF

With gold and metal prices hitting all-time record highs, there's never been a better time to sell your unwanted gold and precious metals. Sadly, some gold buyers take advantage of people who are unaware of how much their gold is really worth. And some of the same gold buyers do not know how to properly test the gold, and have little or no equipment to prove the value of the items.

At Vancouver Gold, we have made major investments to acquire state-of-the-art gold testing equipment to be able to know exact details of the items being tested. There are a number of ways to evaluate your items, and you will be involved in each step along the way. The whole process usually takes between 15-30 minutes, with the evaluation taking up the majority of the time.

Here are a few ways we test your gold:

ACID SCRATCH TEST

The first step we use is an acid scratch test. This may be the only test that is used if the test goes well. We scratch the item on a smooth touch stone (similar to slate). This does not damage the piece in any way, but makes a fine mark on the stone.

TRI-ELECTRONICS MACHINE

The second test that may be used is a Tri-Electronic machine. These machines use an electric current to determine the karat of gold.

SPECIFIC GRAVITY MACHINE

The third test that may be conducted is a measurement of your item's density. By weighing the item first on a normal scale, and then underwater, the density is calculated. Since gold is a very heavy metal, the density allows us to calculate the purity of your gold.

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SOLD YOUR GOLD?

HERE'S WHAT TO DO WITH THE MONEY

SO YOU CLEARED OUT THE OLD BOXES OF JEWELRY AND COMMEMORATIVE COINS AND SOLD IT TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO SPEND THE MONEY?

Assuming you don't need the money to pay next month's rent or this week's grocery bill, here are a few ideas:

TREAT YOUR HONEY Only you know what your sweetie likes best (asking friends works, too). How nice the treat depends on how much you got for the gold: indulgent chocolate, fancy clothes, a cruise?

CHARITY Not all gold is mined equally. Many gold mines in African countries such as Burkina Faso and Niger use children as slave labour. Several charities, such as Save the Children and UNICEF, have projects that target children in those countries.

GET SENTIMENTAL If you recycled gold that was originally bought for sentimental reasons, why not put some of the proceeds into another sentimental pursuit, such as digitizing home movies. Most families have dozens of old photos, movies and videos that nobody looks at in the digital era. Digitizing movies, and scanning old slides and photos can be time-consuming and expensive, but there is no better way to reconnect with the past. Investing in a sentimental project is simply good karma.

INVEST This might sound like your dad, but put at least some of the money into something that will appreciate in value. Good luck in guessing what that is.

SAVE THE PLANET As the saying goes, "think global, act local." One of the best things you can do for the environment is to support urban gardening — farming vegetables in the city. Urban gardens reconnect people with both the environment and with the food they eat. Several projects, such as the Davie Village Community Garden, were made possible by people who donated some combination of labour, money and expertise. If there's an urban-garden project in your neighbourhood, donate some of your gold money to it; if there is no project, use your money to start one!

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS Bet on Vancouver to take home the Stanley Cup this year.

– Peter Doyle

MLB

Owner agrees to sell Dodgers to group including Magic Johnson for record $2 billion

Los Angeles Dodgers owner Frank McCourt has announced an agreement to sell the bankrupt team for $2 billion US to a group that includes former Lakers star Magic Johnson and former Atlanta Braves and Washington Nationals president Stan Kasten.

The agreement, announced Tuesday night about five hours after Major League Baseball owners approved three finalists for the auction, is to lead to a transfer of the team by the end of April.

It is subject to approval in federal bankruptcy court.

Mark Walter, chief executive officer of the financial services firm Guggenheim Partners, would become the controlling owner. The price would easily be a record for a North American sports franchise.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Shoulder surgery ends season for Oilers' Hall

Edmonton Oilers forward Taylor Hall is done for the season.

The team said Tuesday the 20-year-old will undergo surgery on his left shoulder.

Hall hasn't played since March 17 after suffering a concussion early in a 3-1 win over the Calgary Flames.

Oilers general manager Steve Tambellini says Hall will spend five to six months recovering.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Canucks got the 1-0 over Los Angeles Monday night, but the Kings' tight-checking ways might pose problems in the playoffs. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Playoff scenarios to cheer for and to fear

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Edward Fraser
vancouver@metronews.ca

Whether the Canucks finish first or second in the Western Conference — according to sportsclubstats.com, they have a 79 per cent chance of being the No. 2 seed — there are six teams they could possibly face in the first round.

Here, ordered from least to most preferred, is that sextet and why Vancouver would or wouldn't want that draw. The Canucks' record against each team is in parentheses.

Los Angeles (2-1-1): As exemplified by Monday's 1-0 game, the Kings are a tight-checking bunch that keeps the score low (their goals-for-plus-goals-against per-game average of 4.3 will shatter the modern-day record of 4.55 set by Anaheim in 2001-02) and relies on the exceptional goaltending of Jonathan Quick (1.96 GAA; .929 SP). That's a perfect formula for an upset. L.A.'s also heating up, going 8-2 in its past 10.

San Jose (3-0-1): Will the real Sharks please surface? San Jose has been the league's most short-term inconsistent team (six winning streaks of three or more games; five winless streaks of three or more). Like the Kings, however, they're putting it together at the right time, having won three in a row and getting points in seven of nine following a five-game winless streak. The Sharks have always had playoff woes, but facing Patrick Marleau, Joe Thornton & Co. is a worrisome proposition.

Phoenix (2-1-1): Think of the Coyotes as Los Angeles-lite. Thanks in large part to the breakout season of Mike Smith (2.36 GAA; .924 SP) and the system instilled by coach Dave Tippett, Phoenix is seventh in the NHL in defence. The Dogs' brutal power play — last in the league at 12.8 percent — does make them an appealing option.

Dallas (1-1-1): Rookie coach Glen Gulutzan deserves a ton of credit as his team continues to perform well above its makeup. Jamie Benn is a burgeoning beast and Loui Eriksson is one of the NHL's most underrated talents, but Kari Lehtonen's a question mark in goal come playoff time (0-2; 5.59 GAA; .849 SP). The Canucks match up well against Dallas, but they shouldn't get caught up in the Steve Ott shenanigans.

Calgary (2-1-1): The Canucks have two more games to make their mark against the Flames (and likely eliminate them from playoff contention). Calgary struggles to score, especially 5-on-5, and Vancouver's forecheck would give the Flames' subpar D-corps fits.

Colorado (5-0-0): Why would Vancouver love to get the Avs in Round 1? Just look at their head-to-head record. The Canucks have owned the young Avalanche, outscoring them 17-5. Bring 'em on.

4
SPORTS

Canucks preview

Colorado at Vancouver 7 p.m. (Sportsnet West)

The Canucks (46-21-9) host Colorado (40-32-6), which is winless in its last three games. The Avalanche lost 5-1 to San Jose on Monday. Semyon Varlamov has allowed 10 goals in his last three starts after allowing 10 during a five-game winning streak. Gabriel Landeskog has nine points in 14 games this month and leads all rookies with 49 points. Matt Duchene has one assist in 10 games this month.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the web

Canadian figure-skating star Patrick Chan says if not for a move to Colorado before the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, he thinks he "would have quit." Now he's a gold-medal favourite going into this week's world championships in France. Scan the code for the story.

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Caddy enters a new weight class

ALL PHOTOS WHEELBASE

Lightweight

Where the ATS excels is its reasonable 1,545-kilogram curb weight. That's about 225 less than the CTS sedan (currently the only passenger car in the Cadillac garage). That's also less than most of the competition — which should help when the official fuel-consumption numbers are announced closer to launch time.

Safety first

The ATS is looking to match its competitors, stride for stride, in safety with up to 10 airbags plus an array of the latest in collision-avoidance gear.

This includes adaptive cruise control (maintains a safe distance from the vehicle in front) and lane-departure warning with blind-zone alert.

2013 Cadillac ATS

- **Type.** Four-door, rear- /all-wheel-drive compact sedan.
- **Engines (hp):** 2.5-litre DOHC I4 (200); 2.0-litre DOHC I4 (270); 3.6-litre DOHC V6 (318).
- **Mileage:** L/100 km (city/hwy) 8.5/5.5 (2.5, est.).
- **Base Price:** $36,000.

The 270-horsepower turbo four-cylinder is found in other more mainstream GM brands.

Engine

Although the ATS will be available with a relatively potent 318-horsepower 3.6-litre V6, Cadillac is making available two different four-cylinder offerings.

Base cars get a 200-horsepower 2.5-litre four-cylinder, while a 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder is optional.

Review. With boutique brands downsizing, there are hot deals on hot new cars for regular folks. This is one of them.

MALCOLM GUNN
Wheelbase Media

Scaling back power, size and fuel consumption without scaling back the amenities is all the rage these days.

You could say that's the new Cadillac ATS's sole purpose in life.

But would you go as far as picking an ATS over a BMW 3-Series sedan?

Or, for that matter, an Audi A4, Mercedes-Benz C-Class, Infiniti G37 or a Lexus IS? Along with their generally compact size, efficient and still-potent powerplants and luxury accommodations, all of them also offer all-wheel-drive.

Well, that's what you can expect from the ATS, which arrives this summer.

Although clearly Cadillac-looking, the stylists have done a good job scaling down the brand's visual identity.

The result conveys plenty of elegance from every angle, especially around the grille and lower air intakes at one end and the abbreviated trunk lid and vertical taillight bars at other.

The overall shape doesn't dazzle and it's far from ground-breaking, but it is quite appealing.

No prices have been announced, but to maintain a certain spread below the $39,000 CTS and remain competitive with its classmates, you can expect the ATS to start in the $36,000 range.

That should earn it the once-over and a double take from shoppers — luxury or not — looking to trade down in size without giving up all the comfort.

5 DRIVE

Top Gear

A flare with flair

The days of carrying around traditional emergency flares might be nearing an end, especially when you take a look at the features of the GorillaTorch Flare from Joby, Inc. This little guy costs about $35 US and projects a bright white beam from its light emitting diode (LED) or a red light from its three red LEDs. The GorillaTorch Flare uses three AA batteries that provide about 20 hours of white light, 80 hours of strobing light or 60 hours of red light (240 hours of strobing red). If that seems like a lot of time, it is because LEDs take less power than the usual filament-style bulbs found in conventional flashlights. The light attaches to just about any surface since the three feet are magnetized and can be pretzelled around other not magnetic surfaces, which means it also doubles as a bright work light or a light for the backyard or campground. Read more about GorillaTorch Flare at joby.com.

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Natural gas to liquid is fuel for thought

Autopilot

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca

We've heard a lot lately about electricity's potential as an alternative fuel, but natural gas keeps hanging around the fuel discussion, like a bad gas.

But it's a good gas. North America has lots. It burns cleaner than crude oil fuel. It's relatively cheap.

But there's always a catch, isn't there?

The catch with natural gas is that it doesn't transport or store very well. People tend to build just enough pipes and storage tanks for their needs, be it home heating or municipal car and truck fleets. Any uptick in demand and use would require a commensurate increase in expensive infrastructure.

And because you can't store a lot of it, the price of natural gas is more susceptible to drops in demand. When demand drops, prices fall easily, a phenomenon that doesn't bode well for increased production and infrastructure development.

So I was struck recently by a news report stating that the biggest, baddest gasoline producer on the planet, Royal Dutch Shell, is seriously increasing its bet on natural gas.

Not only that, but this year will see it produce — for the first time — more natural gas than crude, on an oil equivalent basis. Shell also expects natural gas to continue to grow as a proportion of its production in the coming years.

Among the areas Shell intends to investigate is liquefying the gas so it compacts significantly and consequently ships easier, for possible overseas export, and more natural gas made into synthetic diesel fuel. Shell already has a big gas-to-liquids operation in Qatar.

I asked energy expert Gail Tverberg of The Oil Drum forum, Our Infinite World blog, if gas-to-liquid leans more toward science fiction than mainstream. She noted the technology is well developed, but it's expensive. Natural gas has to be significantly cooled to get into a liquid state, cooled all along its transport route, and then it needs to go back to its gaseous state before being delivered to the end user.

Converting it directly into a permanent liquid fuel, like synthetic diesel, requires very expensive processing that has so far limited its use as a transportation fuel.

"It's like any energy resource," notes Tverberg. "You take the best resource first, which tends to be cheaper. Then you go to the resources that are harder to extract or more difficult to obtain. That's what we're doing now. Natural gas is more difficult ..."

Difficult and alternative, just like a teenager. Surely at some point it has to grow up.

**MSRP is $27,580 including freight and PDI of $1,590 based on a new 2012 CR-V LX 2WD model RM3H3CE(S). For all offers license, insurance, applicable taxes and registration are extra. Dealer may sell for less. Dealer trade may be required. *Limited time finance offer based on a new 2012 CR-V Touring model RM4H9CKN(S) and a 36 month finance term available only through Honda Canada Finance Inc. O.A.C. Finance example: $36,580 at 1.99% per annum equals $498 for 36 months. Freight and PDI of $1,590 included. Cost of borrowing is $5,085.05, for a total obligation of $41,665.05. Down payment of $23,737.05, first monthly payment, environmental fees and $0 security deposit due at finance inception. Dealer may sell for less. Dealer trade may be required. †1.99% lease APR for 24 months O.A.C. Monthly payment, including freight and PDI, is $498. Down payment of $3,136.01, first monthly payment, environmental fees and $0 security deposit due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is $15,088.01. Taxes, license, insurance and registration are extra. 96,000 kilometre allowance; charge of $0.12/km for excess kilometres. Dealer may sell for less. Dealer trade may be required. **/*/†Offers valid from March 1st through March 31st, 2012 at participating Honda retailers. Offers valid only for British Columbia residents at BC Honda Dealers locations. Offers subject to change or cancellation without notice. Terms and conditions apply. Visit www.bchonda.com or see your Honda retailer for full details.

Natural gas burns cleaner than crude oil fuel. ISTOCK

Crossword

Across

1 Comic strip penguin
5 Witness
8 Slightly
12 Kate's role in "Titanic"
13 Luau bowlful
14 Bro
15 Very active
17 Capri, e.g.
18 Overexert
19 It's handy if you have to break your word
21 — -la-la
22 Roger Rabbit, e.g.
23 "Great!"
26 Performance
28 Exhaust
31 Egg
33 Kangaroo's move
35 Betty's "Hot in Cleveland" role
36 Frankincense or myrrh
38 Third degree?
40 Moon craft
41 Stepped (on)
43 Thing, in law
45 Meager
47 Aviatrix Earhart
51 Jason's ship
52 Profession
54 Quartet
55 Salt Lake athlete
56 Garfield's pal
57 Salamanders
58 Petrol
59 -tat-tat

Down

1 Spheres
2 Sulk
3 Cold War nation (Abbr.)
4 Attack
5 Popeye's "fuel"
6 A billion years
7 Twice 54-Across
8 Fat
9 "Sex and the City" writer Candace
10 Not working
11 Adolescent
16 Old Italian money
20 Thee
23 Supporting
24 Rd.
25 Laugh so hard it hurts
27 Upper surface
29 Guitar's cousin
30 Nonstick spray
32 Kaleidoscope components
34 Groups of words
37 Ph. bk. info
39 Ms. Moore
42 Clean, as software
44 Man of La Mancha
45 Protected
46 College teacher, often
48 Mother of Castor and Pollux
49 "— an earthquake, or ..."
50 Cruising
53 Actress Hagen

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Yesterday's answer

Sudoku

					9		4	
2	3				4	8		
	5		1			2		
	9			4	7		6	
4								2
	6		3	8			1	
		7			6		8	
		8	9				5	7
	4		7					

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer

4	8	3	9	6	7	1	2	5
7	2	1	4	8	5	6	9	3
9	6	5	1	2	3	4	7	8
1	5	4	7	9	8	2	3	6
8	3	6	2	5	4	9	1	7
2	7	9	3	1	6	5	8	4
3	1	7	6	4	9	8	5	2
6	9	8	5	7	2	3	4	1
5	4	2	8	3	1	7	6	9

Send a kiss

- **Guy From The University.** Hey! i dont even know if you read this newspaper but its worth a try! have had a crush on you for a while now! really wanna talk to you but nerves always get the best of me :(I dont know anything about you but would love to hang out and know more :) <3 <3 From Girl From The Univeristy
- **boo bity booboo.** I do love you i do, like seriously how hard is it to just send me an inbox message saying it was me, end of story, end of fighting, we dont even have to talk, i just want to KNOW this is you. I wont even add you i just need some closer. you shy, well i was too and what i sent you was for more embarassing than what im asking you to do!!! Then you justmade me feel even more crazy!!! So please. From Denny
- **Mea.** mea culpa... pls forgive me. i do care, tho i m 2shy to show it. my heart was locked in a blackbox till you cared, u may hold the key to our happiness so pls help me unlock it. mountains of regret i've carried on with a shrug, but i won't let this precious love shatter. From sad

Horoscope

Aries | March 21 - April 20. If someone attacks your reputation today you must defend yourself.

Taurus | April 21 - May 21. You can't seem to make up your mind what you should be doing with your precious time.

Gemini | May 22 - June 20. You must think positive today, especially when dealing with situations where negative words could so easily lead to negative consequences.

Cancer | June 21 - July 22. What you most need is close at hand but you can't seem to see it.

Leo | July 23 - Aug. 22. Think seriously about your money situation today. The answers to your problems are not really that difficult.

Virgo | Aug. 23 - Sept. 22. Go your own way and do your own thing today.

Libra | Sept. 23 - Oct. 22. You need to trust your instincts today, even when – especially when – they tell you things you don't want to hear.

Scorpio | Oct. 23 - Nov. 21. Focus only on things that are relevant to your long-term success.

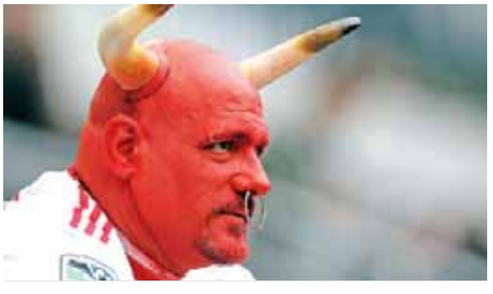
Sagittarius | Nov. 22 - Dec. 21. You may have to make a tactical retreat today, most likely because you find yourself up against someone who is too big or to powerful for you to compete with one-to-one.

Capricorn | Dec. 22 - Jan 20. Your mind may be working fast but can you trust what it tells you? That might sound like a strange question but while mind planet Mercury is moving retrograde it's something you need to keep asking – often.

Aquarius | Jan. 21 - Feb 18. Cash flow problems may be causing some concern but don't let your worries get out of control.

Pisces | Feb. 19 - March 20. If you get the chance to take advantage of an opportunity that someone else has missed you must not hesitate, not even for a moment. They had their chance and blew it, now it's your turn to benefit. Cash in!

SALLY BROMPTON



Caption Contest

"Talk about bull-headed!"
Linda

JULIO CORTEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Win!

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image above and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

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He winks, she winks back
She flirts, He flirts back
Introducing Speedflirt, a flirty new app for meeting singles in your city looking for love or friendship.
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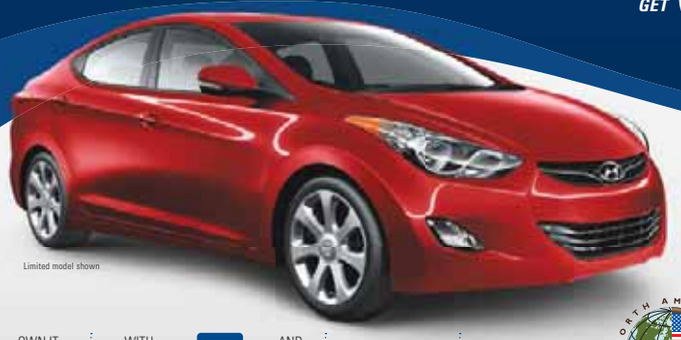
AND SAVE UP TO 40¢/L UNTIL 2013 ON SELECTED MODELS◊



Limited model shown

OWN IT $102† BI-WEEKLY PAYMENT | WITH 1.9% FINANCING FOR 84 MONTHS | SAVE 20¢/L UNTIL 2013◊ | AND $0 DOWN PAYMENT

SELLING PRICE: $17,344* ELANTRA L 6-SPEED. DELIVERY & DESTINATION INCLUDED.

HIGHWAY 4.9L/100 KM 58 MPG▼

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ELANTRA SEDAN

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GLS model shown

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BONUS 7 YEAR WARRANTY 120,000 KM COMPREHENSIVE LIMITED WARRANTY

Limited model shown

2012 SONATA

Most fuel-efficient full-size car▲

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SELLING PRICE: $24,264* SONATA GL 6-SPEED. DELIVERY & DESTINATION INCLUDED.

HIGHWAY 5.7L/100 KM 50 MPG▼

Limited model shown

2012 SANTA FE

Powerful & efficient – the true definition of a cross-over

OWN IT $142† BI-WEEKLY PAYMENT | WITH 0% FINANCING FOR 84 MONTHS | SAVE 30¢/L UNTIL 2013◊ | AND $0 DOWN PAYMENT

SELLING PRICE: $25,759* SANTA FE GL 2.4 6-SPEED. DELIVERY & DESTINATION INCLUDED.

HIGHWAY 7.7L/100 KM 37 MPG▼

$1,500 FACTORY TO CUSTOMER CREDIT◊

GLS model shown

2012 VERACRUZ

"It's a seven-seater, mid-size SUV with serious cargo and people-carrying capacity." – the Globe and Mail

7 PASSENGER SEATING

OWN IT $186† BI-WEEKLY PAYMENT INCLUDES $1500 FACTORY TO CUSTOMER CREDIT◊ | WITH 0% FINANCING FOR 84 MONTHS | SAVE 40¢/L UNTIL 2013◊ | AND $0 DOWN PAYMENT

SELLING PRICE: $33,759* INCLUDES $1,500 FACTORY TO CUSTOMER CREDIT◊ VERACRUZ GL FWD. DELIVERY & DESTINATION INCLUDED.

HIGHWAY 8.5L/100 KM 33 MPG▼

BONUS 7 YEAR WARRANTY 120,000 KM COMPREHENSIVE LIMITED WARRANTY

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5 YEAR WARRANTY 100,000 KM COMPREHENSIVE LIMITED WARRANTY

5-year/100,000 km Comprehensive Limited Warranty
5-year/100,000 km Powertrain Warranty
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Langley Hyundai
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Surrey, 604-539-8549
D#30331

Mertin Hyundai
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